

Monologue Mania!

The Secret Garden

Adapted by Gary Peterson

Female / 20s+ / 1911

About the play: The classic children’s book creates a gorgeous and charming play about love and transformation. Mary, a lonely and spoiled orphan girl, arrives at Misselthwaite Manor to no fanfare. Her uncle is almost always away, made bitter by the loss of his wife during childbirth ten years earlier. Her lone companion in the house is a housemaid named Martha. Left to her own devices to entertain herself, Mary discovers a secret garden, once her deceased aunt’s favorite place, but now shut off from the world. Mary also discovers her cousin Colin, a sickly boy who’s always kept isolated. Mary’s attention and nurturing, both for the garden and for Colin, creates magical transformations. In secret, Mary and her new friend Dickon replant beautiful flowers and bring the garden back to life. In a touching climax, the garden’s magic inspires the sickly Colin to walk and his stooped father to stand tall and learn to love again.

About the scene: Martha tends to Mary, who has arrived at Misselthwaite Manor. Mary has just informed Martha that she always has someone dress her and that she doesn’t know how to “play.” Martha finds Mary, a spoilt child who was brought up in India, quite peculiar and attempts to get her to play as a child should. In this monologue, Martha shows Mary how to jump a rope to a sing-song verse. *(Notes: The jump rope should be pantomimed. [...] indicates where another character interrupts the monologue to speak. Continue as if your character has heard the other person or people respond and react.)*

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MARTHA:

You never play? You don’t play, you never dressed yourself—whatever did you do in that India place? [...]

Oh, miss, if you don’t remind me of one of them porcelain dolls what gets all dressed up fancy and then sits on a shelf! You need to get out of doors and smell the wild world. It’s a fair lovely spring coming, and the earth’s all awaking.

What I wouldn’t give to have the free time to go out and enjoy it. *(Struck.)*

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(continued)

Wait a minute. I has summat for ye. Oh, I know I saw it in this room. *(Begins to open drawers in the dresser.)* I noticed it when I was cleaning onest and it struck me as so odd. Why, here it is. *(Pulls a jump rope out of a drawer and displays it.)* Here it is. You could take this outside. [...]

Why, it's a jump rope! What it's doing in here, I have no idea. But you can play with it. *(Stretches it out to MARY, but she doesn't take it.)* [...]

Now don' tell me you've never played with a jump rope. [...]

Oh, dear goodness! *(With that, she takes the jump rope in hand and begins skipping. MARY is amazed at her. After a moment, MARTHA begins to chant.)*

Silver bells,
Cockle shells,
Eevie, ivy, over.

I like coffee.

I like tea.

I like the boys,

And the boys like me.

Mother went to market

And got bread cheap.

Baby's in the cradle

Fast asleep.

A tiger chased me

Up a sycamore tree,

And this is what it said to me—

I like coffee.

I like tea.

I'd like Mary

To jump with me. *(Still skipping.)* That's when you jump in, too. You say who you'd like to jump with you, and they jump in along with you. [...]

It's the simplest game in the world. *(Stops.)* Oh, well, you take the rope, Mary—try it out yourself. Go outside and try it. You'll have fun.